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NATIONAL LEAGUE OF POW/MIA FAMILIES

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STATUS OF THE POW/MIA ISSUE: May 6, 2024

1,576 Americans are now listed by the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) as missing and unaccounted-for from the Vietnam War: Vietnam - 1,237; Laos-284; Cambodia-48; Peoples Republic of China territorial waters-7. On April 24th, DPAA posted the accounting for USAF Major John C.G. Kerr, 35, reported missing during the Vietnam War, was accounted for April 24, 2024. Major Kerr was piloting an A-26-A Invader attack aircraft on a solo armed reconnaissance mission over the Plain of Jars, Laos, August 22, 1967, and declared dead in 1971.

These country numbers fluctuate due to investigations resulting in changed locations of loss. The League seeks the fullest possible accounting for those still missing and repatriation of all recoverable remains. The highest priority is accounting for Americans last known alive. US intelligence indicates some Americans known to be in captivity in Vietnam (SRV), Laos (LPDR) and Cambodia (KOC) were not returned at the end of the war. In the absence of evidence to the contrary, the US Government should not rule out that possibility and account for them as a matter of highest national priority.

Vietnam established comprehensive wartime and post-war processes to collect and retain information and remains. Thus, Vietnam's unilateral efforts still offer significant potential, especially when reinforced to League Chairman Ann Mills Griffiths by H.E. Minister of Public Security To Lam. In 2022, he pledged to look into all categories raised as needing unilateral SRV efforts. Earlier this year, he welcomed Dr. Jay Veith's Intelligence Assessment of where the issue stands and the League's proposal to form a three-person Special Investigation Team to expedite in-country investigations and interviews year-round.

Until the pandemic halted in-country operations, Vietnam had increased unilateral provision of long-sought archival records with relevant, case-related information. This was due in part to improved working-level efforts, but also to increased bilateral relations across the board. The January 2018 League Delegation brought commitments that offered real promise for increased success. SRV officials were participating with greater seriousness and professionalism, including Unilateral Recovery Teams (URT), led by Vietnamese, some US-trained. Budget reductions interfered with planning for FY2023, and only two small Joint Field Activities (JFAs) were scheduled, but a delayed budget plus-up resulted in two additional JFAs to "increase the pace and scope of field operations," as sought by the US for years and requested by Vietnam since 2009. Due to improved military-to-military cooperation, US Navy assets participated in underwater operations, as did Scripps Institute of Oceanography.

After an initially tough period, JFAs in **Laos** began to increase productivity, allowing ground transportation to accessible field sites and contracting an SRV drone company to provide smaller scale, more capable technology to pursue case-related investigations, recently resulting in trilateral US-LPDR-SRV operations. Surprisingly bilateral cooperation was halted for most of FY2024 due to Lao Government refusal to provide official diplomatic protections and immunities for DPAA Detachment 3 and DIA personnel assigned to the US Embassy in Vientiane. Such had never been raised as a concern for decades until recently and, as a result, DPAA rightfully canceled three consecutive Joint Field Activities (JFAs). Now, despite the Lao Government's failure to restore the diplomatic protections and immunities, DPAA resumed paying monthly stipends in return for Lao agreement to move annual POW/MIA consultations from September to May and permit DPAA "partners" to conduct three recoveries in late July into mid-August. A Lao/Cambodian border dispute impeded field operations there but now, with no DPAA detachment in **Cambodia**, Stony Beach- led/private partner operations for FY 2024 resumed and prospects are encouraging.

DIA's Stony Beach Team: One Cambodia specialist worked full time at the US Embassy in Phnom Penh for 7 years, but now operates out of Hawaii. Research and field operations in Cambodia have long received excellent support from US Ambassador Patrick Murphy and Cambodian officials, now led by newly named Prime Minister Hun Manet. Former US Ambassador to Laos Dr. Peter Haymond was very knowledgeable, supporting full-time use of DIA's Stony Beach (SB) specialist. Importantly, the Lao authorized two additional officials to work year-round with DIA's Stony Beach POW/MIA specialist. For years, two Stony Beach personnel have rotated on temporary duty in and out of Vietnam, collecting information via archival research and witness interviews. The League and DIA have long sought Vietnam's agreement to permanently station a SB specialist in Hanoi, a proposal to which Vietnam finally agreed. After much frustration, Vietnam has now indicated positive interest in the League's recent proposal for a special three-person investigation team, comprised of one each Stony Beach, Vietnamese and DPAA, to work year-round throughout the country.

NOW IS THE TIME FOR INCREASED RESULTS!

POW/MIA STATISTICS

Statistics below were provided by DPAA, but are unable presently to be verified!

Live Sightings: 1,996 first-hand live sighting reports have been received since 1975, none recently. 1,941 (97.24%) are resolved: 1,340 (67.13%) equated to Americans previously accounted for (i.e. returned POWs, missionaries or civilians detained for violating SRV codes); 45 (2.25%) correlated to wartime sightings of military personnel or pre-1975 sightings of civilians still unaccounted-for; 556 (27.86%) were determined to be fabrications. The remaining 55 (2.76%) unresolved first-hand reports are the focus of continuing analytical and collection efforts: 48 (2.40%) concern Americans reported in a captive environment; 7 (0.35%) are non-captive sightings. The unresolved 55 first hand sightings are listed below:

Pre-1976	1976-1985	1986-1995	1996-2005	2006-2015	Total
36	3	1	14	1	55

Accountability: As of today, the Department of Defense lists **1,576** American Vietnam War Veterans as missing and unaccounted-for, over 90% of them in Vietnam and in areas of Cambodia and Laos where Vietnamese forces operated during the war. A breakdown follows by year of recovery for Americans accounted for from Vietnam War-related losses after the official end of the war on April 30, 1975:

1965-1974	War years	2
1974-1975	Winding down USG effort	28
1976-1978	US/SRV normalization negotiations	47
1979-1980	US/SRV talks break down	1
1981-1985	1st Reagan Administration	23
1985-1989	2nd Reagan Administration	169
1989-1993	George H.W. Bush Administration	129
1993-1997	1st Clinton Administration	327
1997-2001	2nd Clinton Administration	57
2001-2004	1st George W. Bush Administration	64
2004-2008	2nd George W. Bush Administration	62
2008-2012	1 st Obama Administration	51
2012-2016	2 nd Obama Administration	27
2016-2020	Trump Administration	21
2020-2024	Biden Administration	6

According to the DPAA Lab, unilateral SRV repatriations of remains with scientific evidence of storage have accounted for less than 200 of the 730 remains from Vietnam; two were mistakenly listed as KIA/BNR in Vietnam in 1968 but remains were actually recovered at that time. All but nine of the 288 Americans accounted for in Laos since the end of the war have been the result of joint recoveries; nine were turned over by indigenous personnel to DIA Stony Beach specialists. In addition, three persons identified were recovered in Vietnam before the end of the war. There follows a breakdown by country of the **1,063 Americans accounted for since the official April 30, 1975, end of the Vietnam War:** Vietnam, 730; Laos, 288, Cambodia, 42 and the PRC, 3. An additional 63 US personnel were accounted for between 1973 and 1975. Of the 63, 9 were from Laos, 53 from Vietnam, and 1 from Cambodia for a **grand total of 1,126.** These Americans were accounted for by unilateral US efforts in areas where access was possible, not post-war cooperation with Vietnam, Laos or Cambodia. Added to results from government-to-government humanitarian cooperation post-war, a total of 297 have been recovered and identified from Laos, 783 from Vietnam, 43 from Cambodia and 3 from the PRC.

For the latest information, call the League Office (703) 465-7432 or
check the League website: www.pow-miafamilies.org